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Community Pride Reporter

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Community Pride Reporter

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Vol.6 Number 7

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Founder of Peabody House Celebrates 95th Birthday

Frannie Peabody, founder of "Peabody House" will celebrate her 95th birthday in an event sponsored by Peabody House at the Portland Museum of Art.

Ms. Peabody, well known as the founder of Peabody House, has lived an amazing life of community service. Her first volunteering experience was assisting with a tea party given by the Governor's wife, her next milestone in 1917 was when she helped roll bandages for the troops in World War I. Her first insight of war showed it meant bloodshed and death not glamor. A good lesson to learn early.

Ms. Peabody received her Bachelors degree in Government and Art History from Smith College in 1925 and since has received two Honorary Doctorates of Humane Letters one from Bowdoin College in 1989 and one from the University of New England in 1991.

During her college years she took advantage of every opportunity to do volunteer work. In the Dramatic Association, she built scenery, helped create costumes and even helped in advertising and design. In the 1930's she married and began her family.

It was during the Great Depression that Mrs. Peabody became active in the National Farm and Garden Association, an organization formed to help Farm women market their products. Her volunteer work came to a halt when tragically her children came down with polio and she dedicated herself completely to their care.

Over the course of time Ms. Peabody has been involved in several publications as Publication Chairman and Editor, among them being The History Of Sweetser Children's House, A Century and a Half of Service to Maine Children. She has also been a Contributor and Primary Fund-raiser for A Passionate Intensity: The Life and Works of Dorothy Healy

Too numerous to mention are all the Awards and Honors that this woman has received, National Society of Colonial Dames of America, Roll of Honor in 1972; Greater Portland Landmarks dedication of the Frances W. Peabody Research Library in 1982;



You are cordially invited to join us in honoring

"Frannie Peabody"

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Sponsored by Peabody House

Sweetser Children's Home "For Services to Children With Special Needs" Award in 1983; "women of Achievement" sponsored by Westbrook College, The Women's Center, and the Junior League of Portland; Human Rights Campaign Fund of Boston Special Award in 1989; Leadership Honoree for Maine, Second Northern New England Partnership in Philanthropy Conference in 1990; Maine Lesbian & Gay Political Alliance, Cameron Duncan Award in 1993; Visiting Nurse Association of Southern Maine, Inc., Award "for bringing the power of healing to the fight against AIDS" also in 1993; International Women's Forum, "Woman That Make a Difference," Atlanta, Georgia in 1995;

National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Excellence in community Service Certificate of Award, are to name but a few.

Ms. Peabody became Co-Founder of the AIDS Project of Portland in 1995 at the beginning of the AIDS epidemic. It was a major undertaking, especially when one considers there were no clients (there was a rumor that there was one man at the Maine Medical Center with AIDS!) There were no precedents in Maine, and no one really knew what was needed. What was known was that there would be clients and their numbers would increase rapidly.

So, it was decided to get volunteers and start a hot line.

This meant information had to be gathered from across the country and volunteers needed to be trained immediately. This became the hot line for the state today. What began as a volunteer effort had in a years time become the structure which is today the largest professional AIDS organization in Maine.

She founded Peabody House after her oldest grandson died of AIDS in 1984. She had been spending time listening to many people talk each week at support meetings and realized there was need for a hospice type home in Maine where people could go for their last days. It had been a dream of hers for years which then became a reality. Six people banded together, soon financial support came. All involved watched as the dream became a reality like a miracle unfolding. Within a year after Peabody House opened it's doors it took in it's first patient. The road was not an easy one to travel but with the help of strong leaders they have been able to provide 24 hour compassionate client-centered care in fulfillment of their mission.

Ms. Peabody has also been a Chairperson or Board member of many Organizations and Affiliations in Maine such as the Sweetser Children's Home in Saco, Maine; Victoria Society of Maine; and Greater Portland Landmarks, Inc which began in 1965. She has also served as a committee member to several more organizations including the Portland Museum of Art.

Ms. Peabody's work involving the restoration and preservation of several Historic buildings which includes the 18th Century House in Hingham, MA and the Butler House of Portland, ME, and other historic buildings is very important to her as well. She became involved in restoration in the late sixties when the general feeling in Portland was that preservation of the old Victorian buildings was the worst thing that could happen to Portland.

...and the list goes on, so come join Peabody House at the Portland Museum of Art on April 19th, enjoy the performance of the Gay Men's Chorus and help celebrate this amazing woman's life.

Gay Rights Veto Foes Outspend Referendum Winners 5-2

By Glenn Adams

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP)

The winners in last month's referendum that repealed Maine's gay-rights law spent less than half as much as the losers, newly filed campaign finance reports show.

Maine Won't Discriminate, which led opposition to the "people's veto" referendum Feb. 10, spent a total of \$509,087 during the campaign, according to campaign finance reports on file with the state Wednesday.

Two groups that led the campaign to repeal the anti-discrimination law, Yes for Equal Rights and the Ad Hoc Committee for Common Sense, spent a total of \$191,745.

Of the \$109,562 Yes for Equal Rights received in campaign contributions during the most recent filing period, Jan. 30 to March 17, \$44,765 was in-kind donations in the form of phone calls, leafleting and mailings by

the Christian Civic League of Maine and other supporters.

Most of the rest of the contributions were relatively small, with the exception of \$5,000 from Roland Fournier of Waterville and \$1,000 from the Aroostook County Federal Savings and Loan Association of Caribou.

The referendum asked voters if they opposed Maine's newly enacted law aimed at banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in housing, credit, public accommodations and employment.

The law had been passed by the Legislature months earlier, capping a 20-year effort.

The heavy spending edge even for a losing cause should not be surprising, Maine Won't Discriminate's president said.

"It's a classic situation. It's always harder in whatever the struggle has been. The minority group has always had to spend

more money than the majority group," said Pat Peard.

"They have the built-in organization in their churches," said Peard. Trying to replicate that kind of organization required heavy spending, she added.

Michael Heath, executive director of the Christian Civic League, agreed the winning side benefited from the support and activism of many churches and their members.

But Heath said his group did not have the exclusive support of religious groups, noting the Maine Council of Churches sided with the anti-repeal forces.

Heath said the outcome of the referendum calls into question the standard assumption that money is a major factor in such elections.

"If this issue comes up again, one would be hard pressed to suggest it is a money battle," he said.

Maine Won't Discriminate received \$133,764 during the latest reporting period and spent \$163,784. Among the largest contributors were the Human Rights Campaign in Washington and Landmark Enterprises Inc. of Milwaukee, with \$5,000 each.

Joe Ricci of Scarborough Downs race track, who is listed as a candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor, and Guy Gannett Communications of Portland, each contributed \$2,500 to the anti-repeal effort.

The gay-rights campaign was aided by Midcoast Won't Discriminate, which spent \$5,985, and the Religious Coalition Against Discrimination, which spent \$1,643.

The opposing side was bolstered by the Maine Grassroots Coalition, which spent \$6,356, and Citizens Against Regulatory Excess, which spent \$3,327.

Mayor Finds Support For Stance On Gay Festival

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (AP) Mayor Mark McBride, criticized for his stance on an upcoming gay and lesbian pride festival, found support among most of the 130 people who turned out for a city council meeting.

McBride was criticized after saying recently that allowing gays and lesbians to march sets a dangerous precedent for "skinheads," "Black Panthers," and other groups he labeled as undesirable.

He was the only council member who voted against closing city streets for the South Carolina Gay and Lesbian Pride March and Festival on May 2.

But at Tuesday night's council meeting, people handed out bumper stickers that read, "Support McBride." Many addressed the council and most applauded.

"We believe that, in many ways, Myrtle Beach sets the pace for our entire county and it has become apparent in recent years that some disturbing events have come

to the forefront in our area," said Conway's Steve Hubbard, an associate minister at Grand Strand Baptist Church.

Patrick Evans, the festival's co-chairman, told the council meeting that his group is no different than others.

"We come from all walks of life, all religions, all ages and all income levels," Evans said. "And yes, each year we march down the street because we are proud of whom we are."

Councilwoman Rachel Broadhurst says she was saddened by the meeting's tone.

"All council people are committed to fight for the rights of all people ... diversity makes us stronger," she said.

However, Cheri Staley of Conway, who attended the meeting, said she backed the mayor "with all my heart."

"He's trying to pull this community back together," she said

Gay Ave Residents Unhappy Over Name Change

CALLAWAY, Fla. (AP) Many people who live on Gay Avenue are anything but happy about a decision to rename their street after a neighbor who donated \$10,000 for repaving it in this small Florida Panhandle town.

City commissioners last week voted to rename the street Jim Crews Road. Crews, a developer who has lived on Gay Avenue for 30 years, said Wednesday that he didn't care if the street was not named for him as long as it gets renamed.

He said he was tired of being the butt of jokes because the word "gay" has taken on the connotation of meaning "homosexual."

"I'm not prejudiced against the word, but when I travel a lot of people have a different idea," Crews said. "When I check into a hotel and when I write down 'Gay Avenue' about 90 percent of people smirk or laugh and ask 'What about you?'"

Mayor Ray Boevink denied accusations it was a matter of Crews "buying a street," but Crews said he would ask for his money back if the street remains Gay Avenue.

Commissioners may reconsider the name change when they meet again March 24 because of the controversy,

Boevink said. The city has received petitions with 313 signatures against the name change and 150 favoring it.

"It was done in honor of the many contributions he's made over the years to the city," said city manager Judy Whitis. "It was the street he lived on and it seemed appropriate for us to do that."

Crews said it was the city's idea to name the street for him. He said he allowed the city to use vacant land he owns to store and burn debris from Hurricane Opal in 1995, saving taxpayers thousands of dollars that it would have cost to haul the material to a dump.

Crews denied having anything against gay people but said he has received anonymous death threats accusing him of being anti-gay.

The name change is effective in September but new street signs already have gone up in this town near Panama City, surprising some residents who were unaware of what the commissioners had done.

"It's going to cost us to change our driver's licenses, checks, vehicle registration and it'll be a mess with the mailing," said Gay Avenue resident Patricia Korkoske. "That's going to be a lot of aggravation."

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White Shocks Assembly: His Remarks On Gays and Races

By Sharon Theimer

MADISON, Wis. (AP) Lawmakers sprang from their seats to give Reggie White a hero's welcome when the Green Bay Packers' "Minister of Defense" strode to the Assembly podium.

But legislators who applauded his efforts to improve the lives of the poor went silent, shocked and stony-faced, when White segued into a condemnation of homosexuality and offered a string of opinions on slavery and racial differences.

White charged on undeterred for nearly an hour Wednesday as lawmakers sank lower and lower in their chairs.

The United States has gotten away from God, in part by allowing homosexuality to "run rampant," the ordained minister said.

Homosexuality is a sin and the plight of gays and lesbians should not be compared to that of blacks, he said.

"Homosexuality is a decision, it's not a race," White said. "People from all different ethnic backgrounds

live in this lifestyle. But people from all different ethnic backgrounds also are liars and cheaters and malicious and back-stabbing."

Blacks were enslaved largely because their skin color made them stand out in white society, he said.

Whites could not enslave other whites because they blended in. They couldn't enslave American Indians because the native people "knew the territory, and the Indians knew how to sneak up on people," he said.

White, who is black, told the largely white Assembly that he had thought a lot about why God created different races. Each race has certain gifts, he said.

Blacks are gifted at worship and celebration, White said. "If you go to a black church, you see people jumping up and down because they really get into it," he said.

Whites are good at organization, White said. "You guys do a good job of building businesses and things of that

nature, and you know how to tap into money," he said.

"Hispanics were gifted in family structure, and you can see a Hispanic person, and they can put 20, 30 people in one home."

The Japanese and other Asians are inventive, and "can turn a television into a watch," White said. Indians are gifted in spirituality, he said.

"When you put all of that together, guess what it makes: It forms a complete image of God," White said.

Afterwards, even the man who invited White to speak, Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen, called the comments about homosexuality "disappointing." Homosexuality is a genetic predisposition, not a decision, said Jensen, R-Waukesha.

"This is the first time I've been at a loss for words," Assembly Minority Leader Walter Kunicki, D-Milwaukee, said. "You can still tell from the tension in the room that much of this was offensive."

Rep. Tammy Baldwin, a Madison Democrat and the Legislature's only openly gay member, said she disagreed with White's remarks, but as a lawmaker believed in putting aside personal feelings to promote a "healthy debate."

White said told reporters later that his comments were about coming together as a society and taking guidance from God. They were not meant to stereotype the races, he said.

As for homosexuality, White said anyone who disagrees with him can consult Scripture.

CBS Sports spokeswoman Leslie Ann Wade declined to comment on White's speech or whether his remarks would affect his chances for a studio analyst's job. White has auditioned for a commentating job at the network.

"CBS doesn't accept bias from any of its announcers of any kind," Ms. Wade said.

White declined to comment on whether he will leave the Packers before the 1998 season.

Church Withholds Payments in Protest

MARIETTA, Ga. (AP) One of the largest United Methodist churches in Georgia has decided to withhold \$58,427 from the national denomination to protest its stands on homosexuality and other social issues.

The board of stewards of the First United Methodist Church of Marietta voted 142-58 Sunday to redirect the money to three north Georgia ministries.

"I doubt that this will be a wake-up call for the Methodist church," said the Marietta church's pastor, the Rev. Charles Sineath. "But we made this decision because we want our church to be restored to mainstream, classical, orthodox

Christianity."

The church has about 5,000 members.

Another \$164,939 that the church is obligated to pay to the denomination remains unchanged, but that money goes to support ministries within the denomination's North Georgia Conference.

A report sent to the local conference said the church out of doctrinal concerns did not want its payments to support the denomination's administrative funds, a world service fund, an interdenominational cooperation fund or a ministerial education fund.

The Rev. Jamie Jenkins, superintendent of the Atlanta-

Marietta District, said the church's decision was unusual but it would be honored.

He warned that if other churches give selectively, the practice could alter the complexion of the conference and its ministries.

The controversy was triggered in part by last year's decision by trustees of Methodist-founded Emory University to permit same-sex commitment ceremonies at its campus chapels.

But Sineath said members of his church had been concerned for some time with what they saw as deviations within the denomination.

Two Men Sued for Civil Rights Violations

WORCESTER, Mass. (AP) Two men accused of using an Internet chat room to lure a gay man to a deserted field and then beating him have been sued for civil rights violations.

The attorney general's civil rights division filed a proposed preliminary injunction Thursday in Worcester Superior Court against William D. Peters, 21, and Frank Labbe, 18, both of Webster. If successful, the injunction would mandate stiff punishments should the men commit additional civil rights crimes.

Peters and Labbe allegedly attacked a 46-year-old Cambridge man in the early morning hours of Jan. 8 after exchanging messages in a gay-oriented online chat room.

After the computer session, the victim drove to Webster to meet Peters, who directed him to a deserted field nearby. At that point, officials say, Labbe joined Peters, and the pair beat and taunted the Cambridge man.

According to court documents, the defendants used anti-gay language to taunt the victim and warned him, "If you go to the cops, we'll kill you. And if we ever see you online again or in any (chat) rooms again, we will kill you!"

Labbe and Peters also allegedly stole the victim's compact disc player and wallet and locked him out of his car.

Bruised and bleeding, the victim walked more than a mile to a local gas station and contacted police, prosecutors said.

The men were arrested by Webster Police several weeks later.

Earlier this month, Labbe and Peters were indicted on charges of armed robbery, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, civil rights violations, threatening to commit a crime, intimidating a witness and conspiracy, according to the Worcester County district attorney's office.

The Webster men, who are being held in the Worcester House of Correction, are scheduled to be arraigned on those charges April 3.

Assistant Attorney General Richard Gordon said the civil rights action filed Thursday, which is separate from the criminal charges, was brought because of the severity of the case.

In the affidavit filed this week, the victim said he remains terrified of his alleged attackers.

"The defendants' threats and intimidation towards me have made me fearful for my safety, even in my own home," the testimony reads.

A hearing on the request for a preliminary injunction is scheduled April 2 in Worcester Superior Court.

If that effort is successful, prosecutors will ask a judge for a permanent injunction against the men, Gordon said.

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Vermont Gays, Politicians, Worry About Possible Backlash

By Ross Sneyd

Montpelier, Vt. (AP) Signs have begun popping up in recent weeks that a conservative movement is organizing in Vermont that could turn back gay civil rights advances of the past decade.

Members of the state's gay and lesbian community as well as some top elected leaders trace the movement to a lawsuit now pending in the Vermont Supreme Court that seeks to give same-gender couples the right to marry.

Few of them believe that the gains including laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, guaranteeing gays and lesbians the right to adopt children, and increasing the punishment for hate crimes based on someone's sexual orientation would be repealed.

But they do worry that the state could be in for some divisive debates about government protection against homophobia, and that those debates could create a climate where more hate crimes against gays and lesbians are committed.

"We're being challenged in a manner that I haven't seen since the late '80s and early '90s when we were debating the anti-discrimination bill," said Keith Goslant of Plainfield, who lobbies for the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights. "It feels like people are trying to go in and undo the work that we did, to challenge our presence here."

People leading the anti-gay marriage movement say that's not so, but

Goslant and others cite a growing list of incidents that lead them to believe conservative groups that inserted themselves into the gay marriage debate in Hawaii are establishing a foothold in Vermont.

A group from Kansas headed by the Rev. Fred Phelps, who promotes a doctrine that he himself describes as hatred of gays, offered to help Attorney General William Sorrell fight the gay marriage lawsuit. Sorrell declined that and other offers.

A new organization calling itself Take it to the People has organized to oppose the lawsuit. It promotes a constitutional amendment defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

A movement described as an "ex-gay ministry," in which people who have renounced their homosexuality, has formed and has tried to get its speakers into local high schools. There recently was a controversy over whether a representative of the ministry should be permitted to speak at Mount Mansfield Union High School in Jericho and the event was canceled.

A Franklin County woman complained in a letter to the entire membership of the Legislature that her baby had been placed in a foster home headed by two lesbians. "That type of lifestyle is against my belief and I do not want my child raised in that type of environment," she wrote.

Social and Rehabilitation Ser-

vices Commissioner William Young responded with a letter strongly reinforcing the state's policy of placing children in supportive homes, regardless of sexual orientation. "The question is really, 'Do I believe that a family that is not in a "traditional" relationship can do a good job as foster parents,'" he wrote. "The answer is absolutely."

There is nothing to suggest that all of the incidents have been coordinated by one group. But there is a general feeling that the gay marriage debate in which there are heartfelt differences of opinion even within the gay community itself could give an opening to those who would like to turn back existing protections.

An organizer of the Take it to the People initiative denies that his group wants anything more than to block the ability of gays and lesbians to marry.

"I don't recall anything in the survey that asked for reductions in current civil rights or political advantages that the homosexual community now enjoys in Vermont," said Jerry Smiley of New Haven, who frequently lobbies on conservative causes at the Statehouse. "There's certainly no objection I'm aware of in the group to civil rights, tolerance of homosexual rights."

Rep. Nancy Sheltra, a Derby Republican who introduced a bill that would ban gay marriage and who helped the Franklin County woman over the foster parent issue, said she did not want to repeal any of the laws.

But she said she wanted to preserve marriage as it now exists and prevent discussions of homosexuality in the schools.

"Hawaii was a state that was targeted for this issue and now Vermont is being targeted," she said. "There's been an agenda in place for a long time for these issues to be more and more accepted."

Some elected leaders are wary that eventually such views could become a political cause.

Sorrell is defending the state against the gay marriage lawsuit, but he said he was determined to do all he could to prevent that from mushrooming into a broader movement that might deny gays and lesbians their basic civil rights.

"I made a commitment to the plaintiff's attorneys that I wasn't going to be a party to that," he said.

Legislators, too, say they worry.

"We have to be concerned about the political climate," said House Speaker Michael Obuchowski of Rockingham. "You look toward Maine and you see what happened there."

He referred to a successful citizen-organized referendum in Maine earlier this year that overturned a civil rights law barring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

"If you're a defender of individual rights, you have to be concerned," he said. "I think one of the jobs of government is to battle intolerance and ensure equality in the eyes of the law."

Judge finds Three Teens Guilty Of Intimidation

CORVALLIS, Ore. (AP) A judge has found that three teen-agers committed first-degree intimidation when they attacked a gay Corvallis High School student walking home from school, prosecutors say.

Paul Miller, 17, said he was taunted with epithets about homosexuals before one of the boys slugged him in the mouth, knocking out two teeth.

Benton County Circuit Judge Robert Gardner said prosecutors had proved their case against Cyle A. Schroeder, 15, of Albany and Robert P. Huffaker and Michael B. Nash, both 16, of Corvallis.

First-degree intimidation means to "intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly cause physical injury to another person because of the actors' perception of that person's ... sexual

orientation."

In the courtroom last week, attorneys for the boys argued that the name-calling wasn't serious enough to warrant an intimidation charge.

Unlike adult court, in juvenile court the teen-agers aren't viewed as defendants and aren't convicted of a crime, Deputy District Attorney Liz Carle said Tuesday. She didn't know when the sentencing would occur.

When Miller was asked Tuesday if he hopes the judge's decision sends a message, he said, "It would be nice, but I'm not going to get my hopes up."

"There's people out there who think what those kids did was right," he said.

Former Connecticut Legislator Admits He's Gay

NEW LONDON, Conn. (AP) When former state Representative Andrew Norton announced his decision not to run for Congress, he said it was because he needed time away from politics.

He now admits he was also concerned about telling voters in the 2nd Congressional District that he is gay.

Norton had been the favorite of district Republican leaders to run against nine-term Democratic Rep. Sam Gejdenson, before he announced in January that he had decided not to enter the race.

Norton said that he only recently told his friends and extended family members about his sexual orientation. Launching a campaign for Congress was not the time to tell the district constituency, too, he told The Day.

At 23, Norton was the youngest legislator in Hartford when he was elected to his first term in the General Assembly. He served five consecutive terms representing the 48th District Colchester, Salem and East Haddam before giving up his seat two years ago to seek the Republican nomination for Congress. He lost the primary to Edward

Munster of Haddam.

In June, Norton, now 35, was appointed by Gov. John Rowland as project manager for the future use of Norwich Hospital, a 600-acre property closed by the state.

Norton said the main reason he decided to stay out of the race for Gejdenson's seat is because he enjoys his current job. But he said he also wondered whether coming out about being gay might have distracted his candidacy.

"It may have been difficult to ask people to take in this information, get used to it, and get the campaign going in full," he said.

John Torrenti of Old Saybrook, who represents the 20th District on the State Central Committee, said Norton's sexual orientation wouldn't have mattered.

"In this day and age, I don't think it would have been an issue," Torrenti said.

"We have a number of congressmen who've been successful. But maybe he felt it would become a real negative. I felt he certainly had the energy and the vision and the desire to run. I was quite surprised when he said no."

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a state-wide, non-partisan organization formed to educate the general public, politicians, and media on L/G issues. Primary goals are to involve the L/G community in Maine's political process, promote civil rights, develop and review legislation, endorse candidates, build a coalition, and oppose anti-gay legislation and referenda. Meetings are the third Thursday of the month at the Maine Education Association building in Augusta. Questions, please call (207) 761-3732 or (800) 55-MLGPA.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

P-FLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through support, education and advocacy. Come and celebrate our children and friends just the way they are! (See listings for Maine & New Hampshire under PHONE SUPPORT and SUPPORT GROUPS.)

Northern Lambda Nord

an educational, informational, social, and service organization serving lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people in northern Maine and New Brunswick. Meetings are 2nd

Sunday of every month at 1 pm (ME), 2 pm (NB), at the Gay-Lesbian Community Services Center, 398 S. Main St., Caribou. FMI write NLN, PO Box 990, Caribou, ME 04736-0990. The Phoneline is staffed every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7-9 pm. Call 207-498-2088 or 1-800-468-2088

The Matlovich Society

An educational and cultural organization of lesbians, bisexuals, gay men, and friends committed to sharing our history as well as providing person-affirming presentations and discussions in a supportive environment. Meetings on the second and fourth Thursday every month at 7:30 pm at the Holiday Inn By the Bay, 88 Spring St. Portland. Free parking and accessible to the mobility-impaired. Call 207-773-8308

National Association of Social Workers, ME.

Chapter, Sexual Minority Issues Committee welcomes new social work members. Our purpose is to educate, provide resources, and lobby legislators on issues involving sexual minorities in Maine. FMI call NASW, 207-622-7592.

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Citizens Alliance for Gay and Lesbian Rights: (CAGLR),

New Hampshire's oldest progressive gay/lesbian civil rights organization, welcomes all those interested in these goals to weekly meetings, programs, socials and various other events. Newsletter. Call Info-line 603-224-1686 or write to PO Box 730, Concord, NH 03302-0730.

The Rainbow Business & Professional Association

A state-wide, non-profit organization established to create a gay, lesbian, bi and transgendered "chamber of commerce" for Maine. Meetings for networking or dinner with speaker events, held in the Greater Portland area, second Monday of the month. FMI write P.O. Box 6627, Scarborough, ME 04070-6627, call 207-775-0015 or e-mail wildboys@mainelink.net.

Maine Speakout Project for Equal Rights Trains and deploys volunteers state-wide to

speak with citizen groups in their towns and regions about their lives and the lives of others who experience discrimination in Maine. For information on activities in your county: 207-879-0480 or write: MSOP, 123 Congress St., #1, Portland 04101. You need not be a speaker to work with Speakout!

Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network

GLSEN is a national organization working to end homophobia in schools. GLSEN members are committed to the belief that all students have the right to learn in schools which are free from discrimination, harassment and threats. All people who share this philosophy, regardless of sexual orientation or occupation, are welcome as members. The Southern Maine chapter of GLSEN meets 6:30 - 8:30 on the fourth Monday of the month (with some exceptions for holidays and vacations) at Waynflete School Library, 64 Emery St., Portland. Non-members welcome. FMI 207-773-9547 or write POB 10334, Portland ME 04104. **GLSEN Downeast Maine:** Meetings held the first Sunday of each month at the Downeast AIDS Network, 114 State St, Ellsworth, form 2 to 4 PM. FMI call 358-2347. All supportive persons welcome, including non-educators.

Support Groups

Hampshire P-FLAG Meetings:

Concord: Meets 3rd Sunday from 3-5 pm at 1st Congregational Church, Washington & North Main Streets. (use Washington St. entrance) FMI call 603-472-4944.

Seacoast: Meets 1st Tuesday from 7-9 pm at Stratham Community Church, Emery Lane, Stratham (1st right west of Rte 101 circle) FMI call 603-772-5196.

Plymouth: Meets first Sunday, 7-9 pm, Plymouth Congregational Church. FMI call 603-968-7254 or 603-786-9812.

Maine P-FLAG Meetings

Portland: Meets 2nd Tuesday 7-9 PM at Woodfords Congregational Church, 202 Woodfords St. FMI call 207-766-5158 or 207-774-3441.

Brunswick/Bath: Brunswick-Bath Chapter of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) meets on the last Thursday of each month at 7pm in the room across from the library, Mid-Coast Hospital, Brunswick. Please use the back door from the back parking lot. FMI call 207-729-0519.

Lewiston/Auburn: Meets last Sunday of the month from 6:30-8:30 pm. FMI call 207-783-9789.

Women's Center

Belfast - Weekly meetings, 9A Main St., 2nd floor (above Jaret & Cohn). Group meeting every Wednesday, 6:15 pm. Women's Spirituality Gatherings, Mondays 7-9 pm. FMI call 207-338-5702

NA: Just for Today

meetings every Wednesday, 8:15 pm, at St. Luke's Cathedral, State St., Portland. Use Park St. entrance in rear. Also Friday meeting, 8:00 pm, Immanuel Baptist Church, corner Deering & High St., Use entrance off Deering St.

Out and About

a lesbian support and educational group, meets on 1st & 3rd Wednesday monthly, 7:00 pm., United Methodist Church, 129 Miller Ave, Portsmouth, NH. FMI: POB 5691, Portsmouth, NH 03902, or call 603-430-5418.

Am Chofshi

A Maine Lesbian/Gay Jewish support group, meets monthly. FMI call 207-883-6004.

Exeter Congregational Church

United Church of Christ in Exeter, NH has adopted an Open and Affirming Statement & welcomes all God's children to worship, Sundays, 10 am. 21 Front St. (near Court St.) Co-pastors the Revs. Michael L.C. Henderson & Jane Geffken Henderson. FMI call Ingrid at 603-772-6221.

Lesbian/Gay Catholics

The organization Dignity/Maine offers supportive Masses for lgbt Catholics & their friends/families. Meets every Sunday at 6:00 pm in St. Lukes Cathedral, side chapel, 143 State St., Portland. Coffee & dessert after the liturgy. FMI call Rosemary or Janet: 207-646-2820 or Laurie: 207-878-0546 or write: Dignity/Maine, POB 8113, Portland 04104. All replies kept confidential.

The Appollo Society

an out-reach, networking and social organization for New England's gay and lesbian atheists, free-thinkers, ethical humanists and Hellenes. Free speech/civil rights advocacy group offering freedom-from-religion support, religious de-programming and fun! FMI call 207-773-5726 or P.O. Box 5301, Portland, ME 04101.

Circle of Hope MCC.

Circle of Hope Metropolitan Community Church meets each Sunday at 2:00 PM at 156 High Street (corner of Deering and High - Immanuel Baptist Church building) A Christian church founded in and reaching beyond the gay and lesbian community. FMI email MCCclergy@aol.com or call toll free 1-888-264-6223. PO Box 1671 Portland, ME 04104.

Central Maine Gay Men's Support Group

We provide a safe place to discuss issues going on in our lives or just to be with people in a safe non-alcoholic environment.

FMI call 207-621-1888 or 207-621-4254.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Discussion Group

1st and 3rd Fridays each month, 7-9 pm. First Universalist Church, 345 Broadway, Rockland, ME. FMI call Larry Godfrey at 207-594-2957.

Support Group—Penobscot & Surrounding Counties

For men who have sex with men. Monthly meetings to talk about issues and concerns. Call 207-990-2095 for more info & meeting times.

Q-Squad

Support group for lesbian, gays, bi's & transgendered. Serving Franklin County, based at UM Farmington. FMI call and leave message at 207-778-7380.

TransSupport

Support group for crossdressers, transsexuals, their families, friends. Meets in secure locations to provide support, education & social activities. Write TransSupport,

P.O. Box 17622, Portland, 04112 or phone 207-945-3092.

Gender Talk North

Gender support. Write for newsletter, P.O. Box 421, Peterborough, NH 03458. 603-924-8828. E-mail gtnorth@top.monad.net Web page (under construction) http://top.monad.net/~gtnorth/index.htm

Trans Counseling

Cheshire Counseling Assoc., PO Box 1124, Keene, NH 03431. 603-357-5544.

Maine Bisexual People's Network

Meets as a part of Bisexual Discussion & Support Group (see listing below). For counseling &/or other bi support, write: P.O. Box 10818, Portland, ME, 04104-6818

Bisexual Discussion & Support Group

Discussion and support group for women and men. Meets 1st & 3rd Wednesdays monthly, 7:30-9pm in room 1,

Payson Smith Hall, Falmouth st., University of So. ME, Portland. Open to non-students and students of all ages.

FMI Fax: SHOLMES@maine.maine.edu. or Call 780-3757 (private voice mail)

Prisoners of Gender

(Refusing to be Barbie, Ken or both). Meets every Friday at 1:15 pm at Davis Room, Memorial Union, UM at Orono

Lesbian/Bisexual Support Group

Meets every Tuesday, 7-9 PM, at Women's Resource Center 101 Fernald Hall at UM Orono. FMI call 207-581-1425.

Dover, NH

Gay/Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgendered support Group meets Sundays 7-8pm, Quaker Mtg. House, Central Ave. Social times too. FMI call 603-743-GAY2 eves.

Lewiston/Auburn

A new gay, lesbian, bisexual support group for the Lewiston/Auburn area meets Mondays at 7 pm at the Unitarian-Universalist Church on Spring St., Auburn.

Bangor Lesbian Support Group

This Lesbian Support Group welcomes any woman who self-identifies as a lesbian. They seek to create woman-only, lesbian-positive space to explore issues and affirm themselves and each other as lesbians. Confidentiality, open-mindedness and respect are required.

Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays from 6:30-8:00 pm.

Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center

334 Harlow St., Bangor. FMI: call 207-947-5337. S.N.A.P.

Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests. Monthly support group for men & women healing from sexual abuse by clergy of any denomination. Meets in Portland location on third Friday of the month. FMI call 207-774-5025.

DEGLO (Down East Gay & Lesbian Org.)

Meets 2nd Saturday of the month, 5:30 pm at the UU Church, Park Street, Bangor.

Maine Gender Resource & Support Service

Information, referrals and education for the transgender community, helping professionals and the general public. Write McGReSS, PO Box 1894, Bangor, ME 04402-1894 or call 207-945-3092.

All Maine Transgender

Group Support for all Crossdressers, Transvestites, Transgenders, Transexuals. All inclusive group, gay, lesbian, bi, straight. Confidential and discreet, Bangor meeting place. Meets the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month. Call 207-947-1686 for time and place; or FMI write AMT P.O. Box 145 Brewer, ME 04412.

Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Parents Group

For dates, places and times write GLB Parents Group, P.O. Box 10818, Portland, ME 04104.

Mothers and Kids Group

Social events and group support for lesbians and their children. Emphasis on inclusion of lesbians in the process of becoming pregnant or adopting. Meets monthly in the greater Portland area. FMI write: P.O. Box 2235, South Portland, ME 04116.

GLAD to be Sober

Meets Wednesdays at 7:30 pm at the North Church - at the corner of north Main and Washington Streets - in Concord NH. Use the Washington street entrance.

Tiffany Club of New England (TCNE)

TCNE is a weekly support group for all transgender-identified individuals: cross-dressers, transsexuals, and others, along with their spouses and significant others. Meetings are Tuesdays from 7-10pm. FMI: TCNE, PO Box 2283, Woburn, MA 01888-0483.

Maine AIDS Alliance

Maine AIDS Alliance: 39 Green Street, Augusta, ME 04330. Call 207-621-2924. Fax: 207-622-2662.

AIDS Coalition of Lewiston/Auburn: P.O. Box 7977, Lewiston, ME 04243. Call 207-786-4697.

AIDS Lodging House: 142 High Street Suite 609, Portland, ME 04101. Call 207-773-7165.

Camp Chrysalis: PO Box 990, Belfast, Maine 04915. Call 207-3338-5089.

Community AIDS Awareness Program: PO Box 457, Rumford, ME 04276 Call 207-364-8603.

Community Task Force on AIDS Education: PO Box 941, Naples, ME 04055.

Dayspring AIDS Support Services: 32 Winthrop St., Augusta, ME 04330. Call 207-626-3432.

Down East AIDS Network: 114 State St., Ellsworth, ME 04605. Call 207-667-3506.

Eastern Maine AIDS Network: PO Box 2038, Bangor, ME 04401. Call 207-990-3626.

Merrymeeting AIDS Support Service: PO Box 57, Brunswick, ME 04011. Call 207-725-4955.

Names Project/Maine: P.O. Box 10248, Portland, ME 04104. Call 207-774-2198.

Oxford Hills Community AIDS Network: PO Box 113, Paris, ME 04271. Call 207-743-7451.

Peabody House: 14 Orchard St., Portland, ME 04102. Call 207-774-6281.

People With AIDS Coalition of ME.: 696 Congress Street, Portland, ME 04101. Call 773-8500.

The AIDS Project (TAP): PO Box 5305, Portland, ME 04101. Web page - www.neis.net/aidsproject. E-mail - aidsproj@neis.net Call 207-774-6877.

Waldo-Knox AIDS Coalition: P.O. Box 956, Belfast, ME 04915. Call 207-338-1427.

Medical Support

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England

Serving men and women, offering annual exams, pregnancy testing, birth control info. & supplies (free condoms!), testing and treatment for infections and STD's, menopause support and more. Evening hours, affordable services, and complete confidentiality. Medicaid welcome. 970 Forest Ave., Portland. FMI call 207-874-1095.

FREE FAMILY THERAPY

available for individuals & families (of any type) who are affected by HIV disease. FMI, contact Chris Behan, MSW at Center for Training and Special Programs. 207-773-6658.

Teen Life Center

Youth Clinic sponsored by City of Portland Public Health, Monday-Friday (10:00-11:30 am) The homeless health team's youth clinic is a place where you can receive free health care in a friendly environment. Located on Chestnut St. across from Portland High School. Confidential health services with access to other support

you may need. Drop in between 10 to 10:45 am.

Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic

Portland STD Clinic provides full range of services from screening & treatment, education & counseling and HIV antibody testing and counseling. Located in Room 303 of City Hall. Anonymous HIV testing by appointment on weekdays from 8 am to 5 pm. Call 207-874-8784. For other STD services: 207-874-8446.

Coping with Caregiving

Provides support for those caring for a disabled or chronically/terminally ill person. Group meets on 2nd and 4th Friday of the month at noon at Mercy Hospital Board Room, sixth floor. FMI call 207-879-3477.

Breast self-exam classes

The Breast Health Resource Center at Mercy Hospital is offering free self-exam classes to teach women how to perform breast self-exams, what to look for, what a lump might feel like, and what to do if you find something that doesn't seem right. Classes are on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

HIV Related Support Meetings

Portland:

Mondays: People Living with HIV disease and all friends, families, partners & caregivers, 6:30-8:00 PM.

Tuesdays: People living with HIV disease and all friends, families, lovers and caregivers, 10:30 am-Noon. TAP, 142 High Street Suite 632, Portland, ME 04101.

2nd & 4th Tuesdays: Living Well focusing on quality of life and empowerment.

Wednesdays: Drop-in discussion group for married/gay/bisexual/questioning men. FMI call Gerry at 207-774-6877.

1st Wednesday: PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support), 5:30 pm. Call 775-PAWS. Charles Wynott, Program Coordinator.

Thursdays: People living with HIV meets from 5:30-7 pm. TAP, 142 High Street Suite 632, Portland, ME 04101.

2nd Thursday: Client Advisory Board, open to all clients of The AIDS Project, 1:30 pm.

The above Portland support groups meet at The AIDS Project, 142 High St., 6th floor except the Tuesday group, Living Well. FMI on that call Sandy Titus at Stratogen Health Care. Call Jane O'Rourke at 207-774-6877 or 1-800-851-2437 for more information.

Family and Friends Accepting Change Together (FFACT), a support group sponsored by Northern Maine AIDS Network for friends, families &

careproviders. Meets every 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 pm, at the Aroostook Medical Center, conference room A. Presque Isle. FMI, Deb Madore of Health 1st, 207-768-3056 or 1-800-432-7881.

Auburn: People living with HIV disease, Tuesdays, 1:30-3:00 pm at Auburn Family Planning. Call Diana Carrigan, Androscoggin and Oxford Case Manager and Support Services Coordinator for TAP at the Auburn office, 207-783-7301.

Bangor: Man 2 Man HIV prevention program for men who have sex with men. M2M offers education, HIV testing, support groups, HIV/AIDS Hotline and workshops. To volunteer or FMI on the program call 207-990-2095 or write: Man 2 Man, POB 2038, Bangor, ME 04402.

Children's Support Group: Fun activities and outings for children who are affected by HIV/AIDS. Meetings are held twice monthly on Mondays 3:30pm - 5:00pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, Park St., behind City Hall in Bangor. FMI call 207-990-3626.

Women's Support Group: Women living with HIV, meets the last Wednesday of each month 10:45am - 12:00pm. Call 207-990-3626.

Biddeford: People affected or infected by HIV, Mondays, 5:30-7:00 pm. So. ME. Medical Center classroom opposite cafeteria on 2nd floor. Call John Bean, York County Case Manager, 207-774-6877.

Farmington: Thursdays: 6:30-8:30 pm.

HIV+ support group. Call Christie Foster at Tri-County Health Services, 778-4553, for location.

Gardiner: 1st & 3rd Wednesdays: People Living with HIV meets from 1:30-3 pm at the KVRHA Annex. Call MASS at 725-4955.

Kennebunk: Drop-in discussion group every Tuesday for married/gay/bisexual/questioning men at TAP Office, Lafayette Center, downtown Kennebunk. FMI call Gerry at 207-774-6877.

Lewiston: 4th Thursday: Great Sexpectations monthly drop-ins for gay, bi & questioning men of all ages. 7:00-10:00 PM, ACLA office (4 Lafayette St.) FMI, Sean-207/786-4697.

Rumford/Mexico Area: Mondays: AIDS Support Group/Phoneline meets from 7-8:30 pm at Mexico Congregational Church, Main Street, Mexico. Call 364-8603.

New Hampshire:

Derry area: Support group open to anyone infected with AIDS/HIV. Hosted by the Ecumenical AIDS Task Force, at St. Thomas Aquinas. FMI or reservations, call Jane Dwyer at 603-432-7530.

Keene: Support group for families, friends, partners of persons living with AIDS or who have died of AIDS. Confidential & anonymous. Meets every other Wed., at Planned Parenthood, 7-8:30 pm. Call Dorothy Anderson at 603-756-4735.

Keene: Support group for HIV positive people and those living with AIDS meets alternate Mon. 6:30

pm. For details call Schultz, 603-357-5270.

Lebanon/Hanover: ACoRN offers support groups, case management, community referrals and HIV prevention programs for people in the Upper Valley. FMI call John or Mark at 800-816-2220.

Monadnock Region: For info., referrals, testing, buddies, speakers & volunteer opportunities call AIDS Services for the Monadnock Region at 603-357-6855 or 1-800-639-7903 or call United Way Help-Line, 1-800-368-4357.

Nashua area: Two weekly self-help groups for those infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS. For times, dates and locations, call 603-595-8464.

N.H. Seacoast "Connections" support group for care givers, parents, families and friends, all those whose lives are affected by HIV/AIDS. "Connections" meets every month on second Tuesdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m., at the Exeter Congregational Church 21 Front St. Exeter, NH. Discussions, information sharing and support are offered in a friendly and private atmosphere. FMI 603-772-6221, or 603-436-8963.

Peterborough: Support group for family, partners and friends whose lives have been affected by HIV/AIDS meets Tues. at noon. Call Maria Rosario-603-924-7191, ext. 1126 for details.

Winnepesaukee Region: HIV/AIDS support group meets Wednesdays from 7-9 pm at Lakes Region General Hospital. FMI call Wayne at 603-524-3211 ext 3900.

Phone Support By Region

National Center for Lesbian Rights Youth Project: 1-800-528-NCLR.

Man 2 Man hotline -Providing HIV/AIDS information, and referrals for identity and emotional support services. Staffed Mon-Fri. 8:30 - 4:30. Call 207-990-2095 or in Maine 1-800-429-1481.

Gay & Lesbian Phoneline of Maine: Staffed Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7 pm - 9 pm. Call 207-498-2088 or (Maine) 800-468-2088.

Boston Alliance of Lesbian and Gay Youth (BAGLY): 1-800-347-TEEN.

National Hotline for gay, lesbian, bisexual & transgender youth. Sponsored by the Indianapolis Youth Group. Staffed & trained, peer youth counselors. Lines are open Sunday thru Thursday 7-10 pm, Friday and Saturday 7 pm to midnight. Confidential and anonymous. Call 1-800-347-TEEN

HIV-AIDS Prevention Project: Staffed

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7 - 9 pm. Call 207-498-2088 or (Maine) 800-468-2088

The AIDS Line: 1-800-851-AIDS or 775-1267. HIV/AIDS related questions, call Mon.-Sat. 9 am-5 pm, Mon. & Wed. evenings until 7:30 pm. Anonymous.

DIAL KIDS: For lesbian, gay, bi & questioning youth under 19 yrs. 774-TALK.

Ingraham Volunteers: Call 774-HELP (774-4357).

The AIDS Project 774-6877. Located at 142 High St., 6th floor, Portland 04101. Call for information and support group meetings in Portland, Lewiston, Brunswick.

Bangor: Eastern Maine AIDS Network: 990-3626

Penobscot County: HIV/AIDS Hotline-1-800-429-1481

Belfast: Waldo-Knox AIDS Coalition: 338-1427

Brunswick: Merrymeeting AIDS Support Services: 725-4995

Bridgton: Community Task Force on AIDS: 583-6608 -

Rumford: Community AIDS Awareness Program: 823-4170

Lewiston: AIDS Coalition of Lewiston/Auburn: 786-4697

Waterville: Dayspring: 626-3435

Ellsworth: Down East AIDS Network: 667-3506

Oxford Hills: Oxford Hills Community AIDS Network: 743-7451.

Mid coast: Gay men's HELP LINE, 6:00-9:00 pm (only) M-F 207-863-2728. FAX 207-863-2794. Also, gay youth info.

Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (P-FLAG) Contacts in Maine (* indicates monthly meetings)

*Dover-Foxcroft: 564-7986 - Sharon

*Brunswick/Bath: 729-0519 - Sally & Gene

*Lewiston/Auburn: 783-6964 - Estelle

*Portland: Rita, 766-5158 or Sue, 774-3441

CONTACTS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

P-FLAG NH 24 hour Helpline: 603-623-6023

New Hampshire: Teen Crisis Line - 1-800-639-6095/1-800-750-2524.

Concord: Judy, 603/485-3943

Webster: Betsy, 603/746-3818

Nashua: Nancy, 603/880-8709

Kensington: Nora/John, 603/772-3893

Stratham: Betty, 603/772-5196

Francetown: Cy/Gordon, 603/547-2545

Rumney: Ann, 603/786-9812

Upper Valley: Fel, 603-785-4810.

DOVER, NH: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Helpline for information, referral or need to talk. M-F 6-10 pm, Sat.-Sun. 9am-2pm. 603/743-GAY2.

Youth Support

OUTRIGHT

Bangor: Outright Too: Supportive, informative and social meetings for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning youth age 22 and under. Safe place for questions, growth, and fun. Held twice monthly. FMI call 207-990-3626.

Central Maine: Weekly confidential meetings for gay, lesbian and questioning youth 22 years and under. First Call at 207-795-6677 OR 1-800-339-4042 and ask about Outright.

Lewiston/Auburn: Meets first and third Fridays. Confidential meetings for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, & questioning youth 22 years and under. Call 786-2717 for more information.

Portland: Meets every Fri., 7:30-9:30 pm, The People's Building, 155 Brackett St., 2nd floor, Portland. Safe & supportive discussions with and for gay, lesbian, bisexual & questioning young people. FMI call 774-TALK, or 774-HELP or write to P.O. Box 5077, Portland, ME. 04101.

Waldo-Knox: Meets every other Sunday in Camden for g/l/b or questioning youth 22 & under. Confidential, supportive, safe space for growth, discussion &

fun. FMI Coastal AIDS Network 338-1427 or write P.O. Box 956, Belfast, ME 04915. Collect calls okay.

Concord: Meets every Thurs., 7-9 pm at UU Church, 274 Pleasant St., next to concord Hospital & Orthopedics Clinic. 603/664-9169.

Monadnock: Meets every Thurs., 7-9 pm at "The Place To Go", 46 Concord St. (Rt. 202 N), Peterborough, 603/547-2545.

Nashua: Meets every 2nd & 4th Thursday at UU Church corner of Canal & Lowell Sts. (near Dunkin Donuts). Call Steve or Gypsy at 603/672-0792. Email: OutrightNH@AOL.com

Seacoast: Meets every Sun. 5-7 pm (movie night), Tues. 6-8 pm (drop in), & Friday from 7 to 9 pm (support group) at the UU Church Annex (next to fire station), 206 Court St., Portsmouth NH. FMI call 603/431-1013, P.O. Box 842, Portsmouth NH 03801.

COLAGE

A national support group run by and for the children of gay, lesbian or bisexual parents. FMI call COLAGE, 2300 Market St., #1

Social Groups

Maine Frontrunners: a gay and lesbian running club sponsoring weekly run in Portland. We meet at the beginning of Back Cove Walkway (corner Baxter Blvd. & Preble St. Ext.), Saturdays, 9 am. FMI call Jim 761-2059 or John 828-4896.

Out on MDI: For gays, lesbians, bi's and our friends. Very active social/support group. Meets every Tuesday at 7:00 pm. Newcomers always welcome. FMI, write OUT ON MDI, PO Box 367, Southwest Harbor, ME 04679-0367 or call 207-288-2502 and leave a message.

SOLO: Monthly Gatherings for Older, Single Lesbians: for fun & friendship. FMI call Kathy 207-688-4737 or 207-725-0179.

W.O.W. (Wild Outdoor Women): Recreational group meets monthly for outdoor activities followed by pot luck socials. Activities: biking, hiking, camping, canoeing, kayaking. FMI: Jen @ 207-787-2379

Wilde-Stein Club: Meets every Thursday at 6:30 pm at Memorial Union, Sutton Lounge, UM at Orono.

ALMA: Active Lesbians of the Monadnock Area (formerly the Monadnock Area Women) meet on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month. FMI call 603-363-4961.

Dartmouth Women's Meeting: Meets every Monday at 9 pm at the Women's Resource Center, Dartmouth College. FMI call 603-646-3636.

LINC: Lesbians Inviting New Connections. A network serving women in New England. FMI call Pauli at 603-668-9245.

Mountain Valley Men (MVM): A group of gay men of all ages in northeastern New Hampshire and southwestern Maine who get together for potluck supper meetings at 6:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month at the Center of Hope in Redstone(NH); outdoor activities and meetings are listed in the monthly newsletter; FMI: MVM, Box 36, Ctr Conway, NH 03813; Paul or Dave at 207-925-1034; e-mail DFISPALP@AOL.COM..

Seacoast Gay Men: Social group meets Mondays(except holidays), 7 pm Unitarian Universalist Church, 292 State St., Portsmouth, NH. FMI call (603) 430-4052, or write P.O. Box 1394, Portsmouth 03802-1394.

Women Meeting Women: Lesbian social/support group meeting monthly at the Unitarian-Universalist Church on the 2nd Saturday of the every month from 2:30 - 6 pm. FMI call Dianne at 603-881-4268, or by e-mail DBalbat@aol.com.

Chiltern Mountain Club: Gay and Lesbian outdoor organization with about 1,200 members throughout New England. Activities include hiking, back packing, biking, canoeing, skiing etc; Monthly newsletter listing trips each month. Call either Tracy Green at 207-828-2535 or Mike Boisvert at 603-669-1936.

Calendar Items

There is an **HIV/AIDS** drop-in support group for those infected and affected by HIV every Thursday evening in Rockland from 6:15pm to 7:45pm. For location of meetings, call Marjorie at the Coastal AIDS Network at 207-338-6330.

Outright is holding meetings in the Camden area for support of gay, lesbian, bisexual and questioning youths. Outright advocates to create a safe supportive environment for youths.

Meetings will be from noon to 2pm on Saturdays March 14 and 28. For more information call 207-338-6330.

Social and support groups, education and counseling for gay/bi men at risk of HIV infection to stay safe. Video nights are the 2nd Friday of each month at 7:00pm. There is a potluck and discussion group held on the 4th Friday of each month. FMI call 207-338-6330.

The Visiting Nurses Association & Hospice (VNA) and the American Cancer Society will sponsor a series of seminars on Guidance in Grieving.

These seminars will be held on the second Monday of every month, at 7:15pm, at the Methodist Church, Elm Street, South Portland.

For more information, contact Julie Shackley at 207-780-8624; Grace Moulton RN at 207-799-3179; or Rev. Tom White at 207-799-0407.

(VNA) will be holding on an-going Adult Immunization Clinic/Health Screen-

The Birthplace at Mercy Hospital offers childbirth education classes through the year at various locations, with each session lasting six weeks. Classes are held at St Joseph's College, Windham, and VNA & Hospice, 50 Foden Road, So Portland, beginning April 9; at 535 Ocean Avenue, Portland and Mercy Hospital beginning March 11; and at Yarmouth Intermed, 259 Maine Street, Yarmouth, and at Mercy Hospital beginning April 6; and at Mercy Hospital beginning April 7. The fee is \$70.00 for six sessions. All classes are from 6:30 to 8:30pm.

A condensed version of the six week *Childbirth Education Class* is offered on Saturday, March 21, from 9:00am to 3:00pm. The cost is \$45.00. Saturday *Childbirth Education Classes* are held at Mercy Hospital.

Tours of **The Birthplace at Mercy Hospital** are offered on a regular basis. FMI or to register, call 207-879-3950. ing Clinic for Adults on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 1 - 4pm at the Visiting Nurses Association & Hospice, 50 Foden Road, South Portland, ME.

Among the services to be offered are blood pressure checks; cholesterol screening; TB skin tests; Hepatitis B vaccine; Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccines, Flu Vaccines (seasonally); and pneumonia (must be 65 years or older) to adults 18 years and older. These clinics are by appointment only. For more information call the VNA at 207-780-8624.

April 9 at UMO

Kevin Jennings, executive director of the Gay/Lesbian/Straight Education Network, will be speaking at 7 pm at 100 Corbitt Hall (near the Maine Center for the Arts). He'll be talking about glbtq youth, safety, and schools.

Following him will be a panel from GLSEN Downeast, to talk about our efforts locally, the teacher training program we've put together, etc and it will also include, we hope, several students from MDI High School's Gay Straight Alliance, people who were in on all the steps which resulted in 52 students coming to the first meeting (school of 600)!

He is a charismatic speaker and of course all of us local GLSEN folk are fabulous too!

Public Service Announcement

The public is invited to participate in a series of meetings to help plan for stronger links between Portland's neighborhoods with our arts and cultural resources. These meetings are part of an ongoing planning process to create a cultural plan for the city. Each of the four community meetings will have a particular focus. The meetings include:

* Arts Meeting: Monday, April 13 from 3:30-5:00 p.m. at the University of Maine, Portland Center; 533 Congress Street.

* Neighborhoods Meeting: Monday, April 13 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Middle School, 522 Stevens Avenue.

* Education Meeting: Thursday, April 16 from 3:30-5:00 p.m. at the Portland Arts & Technology High School, 196 Allen Avenue.

* Community & Social Services Meeting: Friday, April 17 from Noon-1:30 p.m. at the Family & Children's Workshop, Classroom 309, 215 Congress Street.

Mother - Daughter Connection, Loosening The Knots, Strengthening The Ties.

Workshop will be held in the Boston area, Sun., Apr. 5, 1998. (Workshops are usually held on Sat., 10-4:30 & limited to 10 participants.)

Workshops have proved particularly useful for M-D combinations where one or the other is lesbian or bi. Jean Chapin Smith has extensive professional experience in working with families with queer kids and has 2 herself. Sybil Hendrickson also has adult daughters.

For further information, contact Jean Chapin Smith, LICSW, BCD, (617)-876-2113 or Sybil Hendrickson, MA, CAS, LMHC, (617)-864-9887. Workshop fee is \$95 per person (insurance accepted, sliding scale available.)

Short Story Workshop led by Jaimee Wriston Colbert

Saturday, April 18 and Sunday, April 19, from 10:30 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. booth days. To register call Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance at 729-6333.

Childrens Book Workshop led by Lisa Jahn-Clough

Saturday, April 18 From 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at MWPA office, 12 Pleasant Street, Brunswick, FMI call 729-6333.

Same Gender Marriage

Legal marriage is about to become a possibility for the first time. A favorable ruling from the Hawaii Supreme Court will give same gender couples the right to marry and will effect our community and the people around the world. The Maine Speakout Project will present a program on same gender marriage which will include a showing of the Vermont Marriage Video and speakers will talk about how the right to marry will impact their lives. The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn by the Bay, April 9th at 7:30 p.m.

Coastal AIDS Network

Volunteer training for those interested in helping to answer phones, assist with the newsletter or mailings, do fundraising events, serve on the board, or provide transportation to clients. Thursday April 16, 6-8 pm and Saturdays April 18 and 25, 9:30 am-3 pm at the Camden Public Library. To register call 338-6330. Collect calls accepted.

Music & Art

Women In Harmony

an eclectic choral ensemble open to all women regardless of age, race, religion, or sexual orientation. If you are interested in becoming a member or volunteering organizational skills, send SASE (including your phone number) to P.O. Box 5136 Sta. A, Portland, ME. 04101, or call 207/774-4940.

Maine Gay Men's Chorus

a community chorus which brings men together to enhance social tolerance and diversity in the Greater Portland area, as well as affirming the gay/lesbian experience with creative and lively musical entertainment. FMI call 774-2704 or write M.G.M.C., P.O. Box 10391, Portland, ME. 04104.

The Maine Gay Visual Artist's League

meets on the third Wednesday of every month. The League is a non-profit, creative support network for Maine's gay & lesbian visual

Online/Internet

The Maine GayNet Mail List

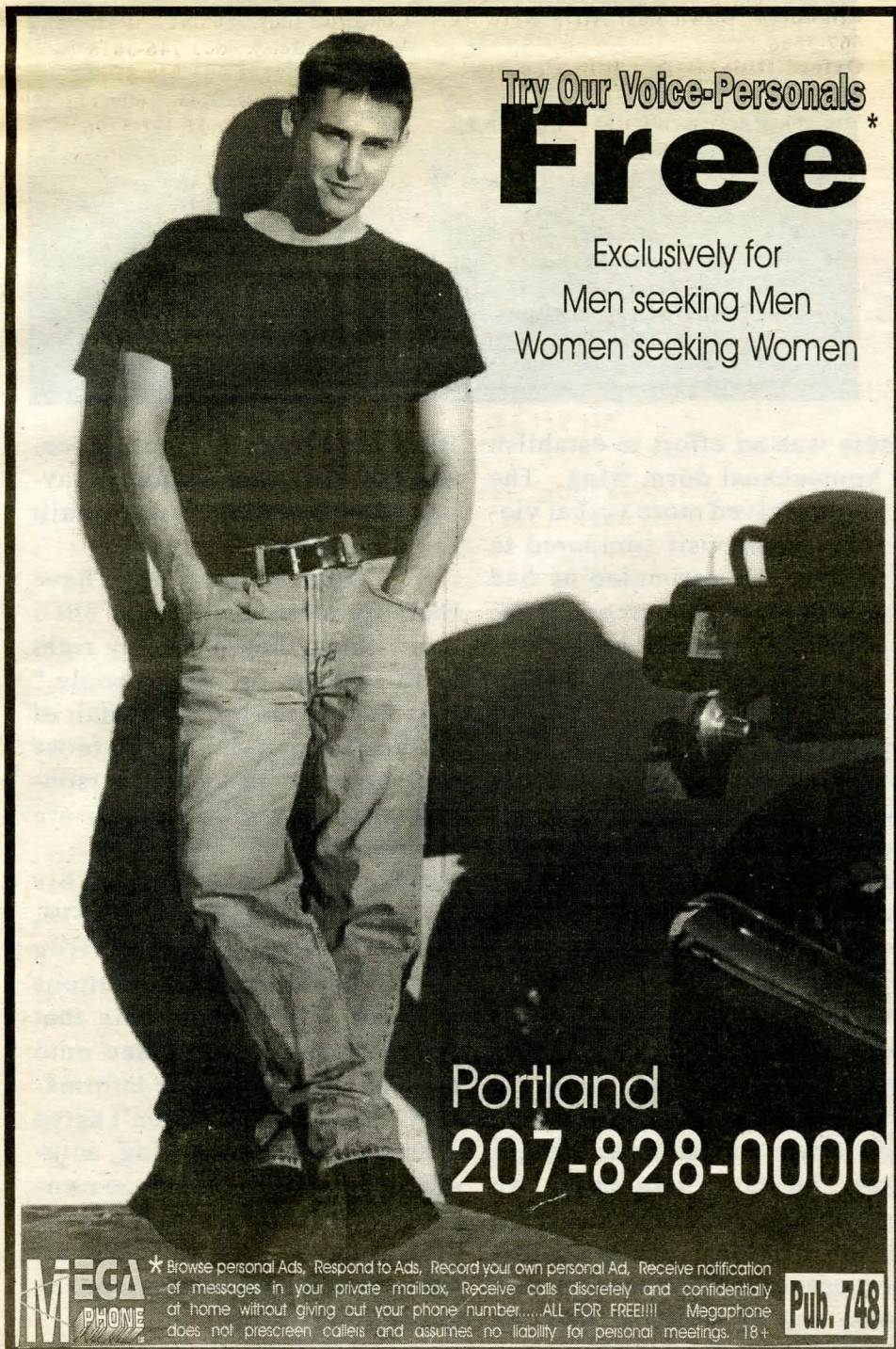
Share your ideas and opinions with other list members. To subscribe to this list, send e-mail to majordomo@abacus.ox.y.edu. In the message part, write "subscribe me-gaynet"

The Maine GayNet Home Page

An ever-changing display of events and information. Meetings, contact people, resources, & referrals. Point your WEB Browser to: <http://www.qrd.org/www/usa/maine>. FMI e-mail Paula Stockholm: paula@maine.com.

San Francisco Gay/Lesbian Tourism Guide

An online merchant-sponsored Internet website geared to gay and lesbian travellers to the San Francisco area. It is compatible with most mainstream



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**Community Pride
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The Community Pride Reporter is printed on recycled paper using soy based inks. This practice reflects our commitment to responsible use of our earth's resources.

Using recycled paper sometimes results in the paper having a toned down or grayish tinge. However we feel this is a small price to pay as Community Pride Reporter does it's part to Color ME Green.

Students and Faculty Rally Against Self Proclaimed Prophet

By Katheryn Ritchie

James McCusker says he has been instructed by God to sit in the Memorial Union today to stop what he regards as "sin" of homosexuality.

"We're not personally attacking them. We're attacking their sin and life-style that we know God is against," the Farmington man said from his booth. "We want everyone to go to Heaven."

McCusker set up shop in the Union with two other members of the Friends of Jesus Christ, adorning his booth with the questions "What is wrong with Homosexuality?" And "What is wrong with Fornication?" And providing answers to students' questions.

Given no notice of the booth's presence, members of the campus Wilde-Stein organization hastily threw together their own booth to refute McCusker's. By mid-afternoon, their table was adorned with marker-drawn signs reading "We're All Gods Children!" Informational handouts and books from the Wilde-Stein library.

"It's really disturbing," said Katheleen Worchester, co-chair of Wilde-Stein. "I know a lot of queer people who have not gone to class because they are upset."

She left her introduction to lesbian studies class when someone told her about McCusker's table. Drawing off a cigarette outside the Union doors, she wondered why the University would allow an outside group to spread propaganda against a segment of the University community.

"The big question is would they allow someone to come here with the question 'What is wrong with the Jewish Life-style?'" She said. Not wanting to be taken by surprise a second day, Wilde-Stein planned to have a larger informational booth as well as a large public display of affection at noon around McCusker's table.

McCusker and his wife frequent the University of Maine at Farmington every Thursday evening to host a similar booth. When asked what brought his group to UMaine, McCusker said, "We just try to follow the spirit of God as he leads us, where to go and when."

He said they last visited UMaine two years ago, when



there was an effort to establish a homosexual dorm wing. The group received more verbal violence at that visit compared to this one. He estimated he had the support of 50 percent of the people who stopped by.

McCusker, who paints houses for a living, said he speaks of homosexuality from experience. He said his wife was a lesbian before she was converted by God. The two will celebrate 22 years of marriage next month.

He said homosexuals don't understand that he is not "out to get them," but merely to get them to stop their "risky behavior."

"We love people and we don't want to see people get hurt," he said. "Ultimately, we are out here to save souls. That is our mission." He is against homosexuality for several reasons, one of which is that the

Bible condemns it. Another reason he cited was anatomy, saying women and men were built for each other.

"I think it's nice they have their opinions on things, but I don't think they have any right to force them on other people," Kris Broski, the other co-chair of Wilde-Stein, said. "How are we not supposed to take it personally when they tell us who we are is wrong?"

He said reaction to his group's table had been positive, with a few people donating money and others taking buttons to wear. "It surprises me that groups like that can come onto campus and spread hate information," Broski said. "I don't agree with what they are saying, actually, especially for a college campus," said senior Barbi Nason of McCusker's booth. "We all know that the only reason for sex is not procreation."

Eastern N.C. Methodists call for Ban on Homosexual Ceremonies

By Randall Chase

Raleigh, N.C. (AP) United Methodist Church leaders in eastern North Carolina want the denomination's stance against same-sex "marriage" ceremonies spelled out in no uncertain terms.

Bishop Marion Edwards, spiritual leader of Methodists in 56 eastern North Carolina counties, is requesting a special session of the General Conference, the denomination's national governing body, to pass an outright ban on same-sex ceremonies.

A former North Carolina pastor ignited a debate over the church's position on such ceremonies when he performed a lesbian wedding at his Nebraska church in September.

Edwards, leader of the North Carolina Annual Conference, called a special meeting of his 12 district superintendents last week after a church panel acquitted the Rev. Jimmy Creech of disobeying church rules.

Edwards and his cabinet agreed to ask the national Council of Bishops, which meets in Lincoln, Neb., next month, to call for a special session of the General Conference. Edwards plans to take the request with him to the council meeting.

"I'll probably be just one of hundreds doing this," he said Wednesday.

The council meeting will be held about an hour's drive from Omaha, where Creech performed the lesbian ceremony in defiance of his bishop, Joel Martinez.

Earlier this month, following a two-day inquiry in Kearney, Neb., a panel of 13 ordained elders voted 8-to-5 to convict Creech of violating the Order and Discipline of the United Methodist Church. The vote fell one short of the nine required under church policy for conviction.

"I think this is an issue over which

there is a radical difference of opinion, but the official position of the church ... still stands," Edwards said.

According to the 1996 Discipline of the United Methodist Church, homosexuals, like heterosexuals, are individuals of sacred worth.

"Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's grace is available to all," the book reads.

It further states that "self avowed practicing homosexuals" are not to be accepted as candidates for ordination, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in the church.

Regarding marriage, the book states: "Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by a United Methodist minister and shall not be conducted in our churches."

"The issue on that is, 'Is this law, or is it something that is recommended to live by?'" said the Rev. Kermit Braswell, superintendent of the Raleigh district of the North Carolina Annual Conference.

Braswell said he supports the call for a special session of the General Conference, which is not scheduled to meet again until 2000.

Two years ago, clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference voted to endorse a policy declaring homosexuality incompatible with Christian teaching.

"There are some people that may not agree with it, but that is the position of the church," Edwards said.

Creech, a Goldsboro native, had served in pastorates within the North Carolina Annual Conference for two decades. He lost his job at Fairmont United Methodist Church in Raleigh in

1990 after marching in a homosexual rights parade. He later became senior pastor of Omaha's largest Methodist church.

Following the Nebraska panel's decision, Edwards issued a pastoral letter stating that the panel's decision does not alter the church's position on homosexuality or same-sex ceremonies.

"Only the General Conference sets the rules and the Bishops of the Church are given the responsibility for interpreting them officially, as Bishop Martinez did in the Creech matter," Edwards wrote.

The North Carolina conference has taken a stand on homosexuality in the past. The conference stopped giving money to the North Carolina Council of Churches in 1993 when it admitted the predominantly-gay Metropolitan Community Churches. Creech, who was then working at the council, was instrumental in admitting the denomination.

Creech said the cabinet's statement stems from a fear of homosexuality.

"If the reaction continues like this, we're on our way to becoming the most homophobic denomination in the country," he told The News & Observer of Raleigh from his Omaha church. "What kind of Christ are we giving witness to when we're so distressed by our fears and feel such a need to be punitive and unaccepting of gay men and lesbians?"

Charlene Kammerer, bishop of the Western North Carolina Conference, was unavailable for comment Wednesday but also issued a pastoral letter following the Nebraska decision. In a memo to district superintendents accompanying the letter, she said she fully supports the church's position.

Mayor's Gay-Protection Order Blocked

HOUSTON (AP) A judge has blocked the city, at least temporarily, from enforcing Mayor Lee Brown's executive order banning discrimination against lesbians and gays in city government.

State District Judge Patrick W. Mizell agreed with City Council member Rob Todd and conservative businessman Richard Hotze that Brown lacks authority under the city charter to impose such an order.

However, Mizell also found that Hotze lacks standing to pursue the case, leaving Todd as the lone plaintiff.

"I would not have filed the suit if I hadn't been utterly convinced I was right and that it involved a substantial policy interest," Todd said. "I think it's fair for me to call on the mayor to do the right thing, and if he wished to proceed, to put it back to the voters."

After a briefing by city attorneys, Brown said he is considering an appeal.

"We are disappointed with Judge Mizell's ruling," Brown said. "We continue to believe that our interpretation is correct, that the mayor has the power to issue executive orders."

Brown signed the order in January, fulfilling a campaign pledge to ban discrimination in city government on the basis of sexual orientation.

Although criticized by some City Council conservatives, Brown's idea had the support of a council majority if he decided to seek an anti-discrimination ordinance. But Brown issued an executive order, instead.

Mizell said the charter authorizes only the council and the Civil Service Commission to make rules regarding discrimination, not the mayor.

But city attorneys argued that the commission usually hears grievances and protects employee rights without functioning as a rule-making body.

Mizell's order rejected such claims, noting "the historical practice of the city does not alter the plain language of the charter."

The judge noted that every anti-discrimination measure the city offered for his consideration had, at some point, been voted on by council.

Hotze said he plans to appeal the ruling excluding him from the lawsuit.

But he said he also has "mixed feelings" about winning an order against the city.

"I feel sorry for the mayor because he was advised poorly. What he did was illegal and nobody at City Hall would tell him so," Hotze said. "But at the same time, I am elated we have struck a blow for what was right."

Todd has denied that their lawsuit was intended to suppress homosexuals. He and Hotze say their suit is aimed at procedural concerns alone.

But some in the gay community remain unpersuaded, including some gay conservatives who said eradicating discrimination is a goal all conservatives should share.

"It's certainly ironic that Mr. Hotze wants to perpetuate discrimination, and that in all the years he has been involved in politics in Houston he has never questioned the mayor's right to issue executive orders until it comes down to employment equality for gay city employees," said Clarence Bagby, president of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus.

Community Pride Reporter

Our Mission

Community Pride Reporter serves as a source of local, state, national and international news, information, ideas and opinions by and for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. CPR pledges to present materials that contribute in positive ways to lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgendered people.

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CPR encourages readers to write! Material submitted for publication must be legibly signed and include address and/or phone number for verification. All submissions are subject to editing. Please keep letters to the CPR Mailbag to 300 words or less. Slightly longer and more composed submissions may be considered for a guest editorial at the Publishers discretion. If requested, the Publisher may agree to withhold the name of an author for appropriate reasons. Questions regarding submissions should be directed to the publishing editor.

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Submissions are welcome throughout the month and will be published, at the publishers discretion, in the next available issue.

Please contact the office at 207-282-6045 for special publishing needs especially inclusion in a particular issue.

Arts & Entertainment

The Year Of The Tiger: Celebrate Cambodian New Year in Portland

Join Portland's Performing Art's House Island Project and the Maine Khmer Council in celebrating the rebuilding of a culture shattered by civil war and removal to a new land. The 1998 Cambodian New Year Festival includes Cambodian food and performances of classical and folk music and dance.

Master Dancers Chan Moly Sam and Sam Ouen-Tes lead the Portland Cambodian Dance Troupe with special musical performances by Kim Chhay, a virtuoso of the trou-sou (Cambodian two-string spike fiddle) and Sam-Ang Sam, director of the Apsara Ensemble

Cambodian New Year Festival is a collaboration of Portland Performing Arts/House Island Project and the Maine Khmer Council and is supported by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support from Shop & Save, Holiday Inn by the Bay and WMPG.

Trained at the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Phen, Sam-Ang Sam was studying

advanced music composition at the Conservatory of Music, University of the Phillipines, when his homeland was taken over by the Khmer Rouge. As a refuge to the United States in 1977, he continued his studies, earning a Masters in Music Composition from Connecticut College and a PhD in ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University.

As the director of the Apsara Ensemble, and the author of several books about Khmer music and dance, Sam-Ang has been instrumental in the preservation of classical Cambodian Dance and music, which was nearly lost during the years of the Khmer Rouge holocaust. In 1994, Dr. Sam-Ang Sam received a MacArthur Fellowship in recognition of his contributions to the survival of Cambodian dance and music traditions.

During the early '70s, Chan Moly Sam was the principal soloist with the royal court dance company in Phnom Phen. When Cambodia fell to the Khmer Rouge, the dancers and musicians associated with

the palace were persecuted and most died. Chan Moly came to the U.S. as a refugee, and discovered that she was one of the few surviving bearers of the great Khmer classic dance traditions.

She has helped preserve Cambodian Dance traditions in the U.S. by training a new generation of dancers and creating performances with her company, the Apsara Ensemble, directed by Sam-Ang Sam. Chan Moly has performed throughout the U.S. and at the White House. During her House Island residencies over the past three years, she has worked with Sam-Ang Sam and local dancers to develop the Portland Cambodian Dance Troupe which performs with musicians of the Samaki Ensemble, Maine's Cambodian music group.

The Festival is being held on Friday April 17, 7:30 p.m. Father Hayes Center, 699 Stevens Avenue, Portland. Admission is \$6/under 12 free. Family admission is \$12. FMI, call Mary Beth Lapin or Bau Graves at 207-761-0591.

Alice in Bed:

Susan Sontag's strange allegorical work

Pre-eminent philosopher William James and his novelist brother Henry had an equally brilliant sister, Alice. Why have we never heard of her?

Henry James Sr pushed his sons to "convert and convert" their experiences of culture into highly articulate and self-conscious written commentary. They were not allowed to "settle" into an occupation, but goaded to pursue "something unconnected with specific doing....free and uncommitted....finer." While her brothers battled through these impossible prescriptions, Alice was confined to bed with nervous disorders from most of her adult life, and produced only her belatedly published diaries and letters.

Alice was further impeded by her father's view of women as vessels of virtue, innocence, and self-sacrifice, and by her mother's belief that women should "give everything and ask nothing." Though Alice was permitted to study, she could rarely run or play, was corsetted, and was restricted from visiting friends because she was "too excitable."

Small wonder that, after hours confined in their library, she would find herself overcome by "waves of violent inclination to throw herself out the window, or knock the head off" her father. Afraid of her own impulses and with nowhere to turn, Alice took to her bed and safely confided her insights to her diary.

This whimsical historical fantasy on Alice James's life features a witty, rebellious, and most indecorous Victorian heroine - an upper-class "lady" who threatens Dad with a brick, trades wisecracks with a burglar, and offers her tea party guests a hookah. And what a party! Her guests include poet Emily Dickinson and philosopher Margaret Fuller, who shared her father-dominated world, and vengeful or guilt-ridden characters out of popular opera and ballet of her period.

Interest in Gays Spawns Clash Over Exclusive Club

By Rosalind Bentley

Minneapolis, Minn. (AP) This is the rhythm of two cultures keeping a curious distance, at times clashing, at times chatting, but never quite embracing.

It takes place almost every Friday and Saturday night at the Gay 90's, the Twin Cities's most recognized gay nightspot. It unfolds like clockwork. Just sit on a bar stool and watch.

Friday, shortly after 8 p.m.

From the perch along the massive bar on the main floor where the male strippers will perform later, the dinner hour is in full swing. Nearly 100 baby-boom men laugh and talk.

There is an intimacy here, of the private club sort. No matter that a handful of women dot the crowd. All around are clues to who lays claim to this cavernous lair.

But the certainty that this is a gay men's nightclub erodes with every tick of the clock.

About a quarter-to-nine, a couple arrives whose difference is apparent. She: makeup picture perfect, dress disco-snug. He: skin heavily cologned, suit freshly pressed. Their gaze says they belong to each other. A man eating dinner gives them a long once-over.

By 9:30 p.m. straight couples are pouring in. A pink-sweated woman already a couple of sheets to the wind is stuffing a \$1 bill into a dancer's red G-string on the strip bar.

"I like it the way it used to be," says one man as he watches the display of skin and lust. At 10:15 p.m., he becomes one of the last of the regulars to leave.

The Gay 90s, a bastion of gay nightlife for the past 20 years, has become a forum for a peculiar movement between gays and straights. The crowd on weekend nights is split 50-50 between the groups.

Two lawsuits were filed against the club alleging straight men and women were denied admittance or received poor service once inside because they are straight. The club's owner denied it. The suits were settled after voluntary mediation.

The issue of cultural assimilation always has been vexing. What happens when a group wants to maintain its culture but also wants mainstream acceptance? How is that balance reached in light of state human rights laws that bar discrimination against people of any sexual orientation? And what happens when people act on their

desire to see how the other half lives?

"It's like now you (straights) have an opportunity to immerse yourself in this freaky culture at the 90's," says Ken Darling, the Q-Monthly columnist who has been one of the loudest opponents. "I don't think it's worth winning back. It's been made clear that we're not welcome."

Drag performer Miss Camille Collins warms up the crowd. Everybody knows he is a she. That's why they're here.

"Are you boys straight?" she asks three men seated to her right.

The men nod coolly, unruffled by the question.

"I know the gay community gets upset because this is a gay club, and I know some don't like straight people here. I can appreciate that," says Troy Smith, 22. "But, hey, it's a cool place. I don't know if the owner wants straight people to come in, in a way to promote understanding, or whether he's trying to make a buck. But it's a fun place."

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, gay liberation was in the spotlight and many prominent pop culture images were gay - "To Wong Foo," "The Birdcage" and RuPaul.

As "we see more and more

straights going to gay dance clubs, it's a sign of acceptance and interest in gay culture, where just 20 or 30 years ago it was a very underground phenomenon that was mentally associated with the criminal underground, sexual violence and danger," says George Chauncy, a history professor at the University of Chicago, and author of "Gay New York."

Steve Abrams is a co-owner of Rumba, a restaurant in Chicago's primarily gay Boystown district that features nightly drag performances. His customer base is mostly heterosexual.

"All we as gay men and women wanted was to be accepted," Abrams says. "Now we seem to be doing the same thing that was done to us. It's a sort of self-segregation that just doesn't make sense to me."

Stephen Cooper, a lawyer and former state human rights department director. He says shared space is simply the down side of progress.

"What's going on here is a sexual-orientation litmus test," Cooper says. "How do you simultaneously allow people to feel, 'We're a part of the whole,' but also feel 'We're part of a subset?' It's a complex question that nobody's ever going to get the answer to."

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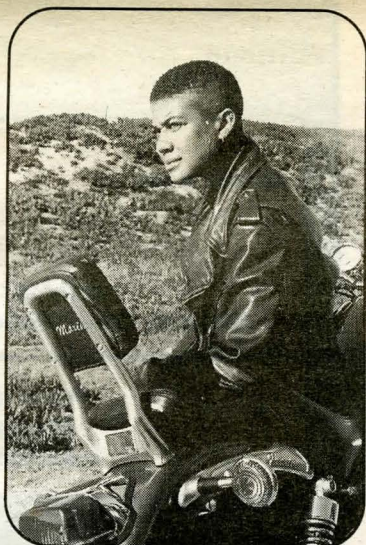


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